

Nebraska State
Records Board
440 S 8th St Ste 210
Lincoln, NE 68508
(402) 471-2745



John A. Gale
Chairman

RECORDS MANAGEMENT
DIVISION

APR 15 2011

RECEIVED

APPLICATION FOR STATE RECORDS BOARD GRANT TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION

The Nebraska State Records Board is sponsoring a grant program for Nebraska government agencies for the development of programs and technology to improve electronic access to state government information and services. Grants will be awarded for one time funding of small projects. No grant request shall exceed \$25,000.00. The grants may be used for the creation or enhancement of electronic access and delivery of government services and information, but not to fund ongoing operations. Nebraska government agencies wishing to apply for these grants may want to first contact Nebraska.gov to establish feasibility and scope of the project.

Applications received by April 20, 2011 will be considered for funding by the NE State Records Board at their meeting on July 20, 2011.

NOTE: Loss of Funding. The NE State Records Board may be unable to award grant funds, in whole or in part, in the event funding is no longer available.

Grant Criteria

Grant projects requesting funding must meet criteria #1-3.

1. Enhance the delivery of local government agency services and improve the public and business access to those services.
2. Meet the all applicable Nebraska Information Technology Commission Standards and Guidelines. State's technology access clause for providing equal access to services for persons with disabilities. A copy of the technology access clause is available at: <http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/standards/index.html> under 2. Accessibility Architecture.
3. If the project or service created or improved pursuant to the grant application involves the licensing, permitting or regulation of businesses, then the project or service must allow integration with the State of Nebraska's Business Portal at: <http://www.nebraska.gov/index.phtml?section=business>, and the One-Stop Online Business Registration System at: <http://www.nebraska.gov/osbr/cgi/domestic.cgi?osbraapplication/init/init/None>.

In addition, the following criteria will be considered when reviewing applications:

- Does the project enhance the delivery of state/local government agency services and improve the public, government and business access to those services?
- Does the project reduce the amount of reliance on human capital, paper, and office overhead?
- Does the project span more than one office or agency?
- What is the size of the customer base for this service and the geographic impact?
- Is there financial and or in kind contribution from other partners?
- Is there documented community support for the project?

Responses are required to all questions in Parts I, II & III in order to be considered for funding:

Part I. Grant Summary

1. **Name of agency applying for grant** Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education
2. **Title of project** ACE Scholarship Automation Project
3. **Brief description of project:** The Access College Early (ACE) Scholarship Program pays tuition and mandatory fees for qualified, low-income high school students across the state to enroll in college courses from Nebraska's eligible colleges or universities, either through dual-enrollment or early enrollment agreements with these institutions. High school students may apply for funding under this program by completing the ACE Student Application, which is reviewed by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE) for award consideration. There are two basic criteria for high school students to qualify for the ACE Scholarship. Students must either be eligible to receive assistance under a variety of federal need-based government programs or the student and his or her family must have experienced a recent hardship. Currently, CCPE's financial aid coordinator manually processes these applications – roughly 3,000 a year, with each application producing a minimum of three additional documents. Funds from this grant would be used to automate this application process, using a combination of case-management, content management and fax-to-email software.

4. Grant amount requested \$5,900 to \$9,900

5. If the grant is to create an application, is the application to have a fee associated with its use for accessing public records, or is the application free for use by the public, businesses and other governmental agencies? Free for use by the public.

If there is to be a fee, provide any statutory authorization for assessing the fee. N/A

6. If the grant application is for a Geographic Information System project, do you and the agency you represent agree to share the data collected in that project, without costs, with other interested government agencies in the State that may have a need for such data? N/A

Part II. Grant Detail

- 1. Please describe the project in detail, to include your vision for the project. (You may attach this description). See Attachment 1.**
- 2. Please describe who the beneficiary or recipient of this service will be.** The beneficiaries of this project would be high-school guidance counselors, the State of Nebraska, Nebraska colleges and universities and, ultimately, the ACE scholarship recipients.
- 3. What is the projected activity for access or use of the proposed service?** Currently, CCPE's financial aid coordinator manually processes roughly 3,000 applications annually for the ACE scholarship program. The number of applications continues to grow significantly each year (538 applications in 2007-08; roughly 3,000 applications in 2010-11). This project would automate and, as a result, greatly streamline the process for the review all of these applications. This automation also would increase access for the high-school guidance counselors and allow them and their students to complete their application online in a secure manner.
- 4. Timeline for implementation of the project (a specific completion date (MM/YYYY) must be provided). Grant funds may lapse if not expended prior to completion date.** The work for this project would begin in August 2011, with a completion date of October 2011. It's estimated the initial implementation stage would take approximately 20 work days, followed by another 14 days of testing before the project is completed.

5. **Please specify in detail your, or any other Subdivision(s) contribution to the project (financial, labor, equipment etc.). Provide specific dollar amounts.** Grant funds would pay for the entire project, to be implemented by an outside vendor. A CCPE staff member would handle ongoing maintenance of the implemented system as part of that position's current job duties.
6. **Is other funding available for this project (explain)? Please explain what efforts your agency has made to obtain funding.** CCPE, like other state agencies, has weathered consistent reductions to its budget during recent years. The majority of CCPE's budget is pass-through funds going toward student financial aid programs. Of the remaining funds used for operating expenses, the overwhelming majority goes toward staff salaries and benefits – leaving roughly \$100,000 a year for *all* remaining expenses, such as rent, communications and printing. In short, there are no available funds for this project from CCPE's budget, nor have CCPE staff discovered other grant funds for such a project.
7. **Does the project require additional statutory authority (explain)?** No.
8. **Specify (in detail) what the grant money will be used for. Include a complete cost breakdown of the project. Please attach bids from vendors (if applicable) and describe the relationship, if any, between a vendor and you or your agency.** Grant funding would be used to pay an outside vendor for the design and installation of software, as well as necessary hardware. Ideally, CCPE staff would interview and hire a computer science student from a state college or university to complete this work. We're confident in our ability to hire a qualified student for this job, not only because of the pool of quality potential candidates but because CCPE staff possess the technical knowledge and expertise to determine candidates' qualifications. Furthermore, hiring a student would support CCPE's overall mission of supporting higher education in Nebraska. However, if a student were unavailable to do the work, CCPE staff would pursue a vendor from the private sector. We are confident the work could be done for the proposed price, no matter who is hired, based on industry standards.

Vendor work - \$4,000 (20 working days at \$25/hour) for a college student OR \$8,000 (20 working days at \$50/hour) for a private-sector vendor. (We would notify you if we are unable to hire a college student and would therefore need the greater amount.)

Customize look and feel for software – 2 days (\$400-\$800)

Create accounts and online working groups for high school counselors, college coordinators and CCPE – 2 days (\$400-\$800)

Create appropriate civiCRM cases to accomplish desired workflow – 2 days (\$400-\$800)

Configure and code the behavior of civiCRM case system to meet the project's needs – 4 days (\$800-\$1,600)

Configure and code system so interface is intuitive to users – 3 days (\$600-\$1,200)

Document steps to re-create system in case of future system crash – 5 days (\$1,000-\$2,000)

Install and configure fax system to work with other supporting software – 2 days (\$400-\$800)

Computer - \$1,900

Machine would be a PC (Dell), with monitor, and include a three-year warranty, fax-modem card, and two 2-TB external hard drives for backup of image and system data.

TOTAL: \$5,900 - \$9,900 (depending on hiring of student or private-sector vendor)

9. **Why the grant money is needed for the project, and, if applicable, how will the service be sustained once the grant money is expended?** Because of severe budget constraints, this project would not be possible without this grant. Current staff do not possess the resources to complete the project, primarily due to time constraints. However, once implemented, CCPE staff do possess the expertise and resources necessary for maintenance and, if necessary, expansion.
10. **Should available fund not allow the NSRB to grant the full amount requested, but a reduced amount, would this project still be financially feasible?** No.
11. **Please describe how this project will enhance the delivery of government agency services and improve the public and/or business access to those services.** The CCPE awards roughly 3,000 ACE scholarship awards annually to low-income Nebraska high-school students who enroll in courses at Nebraska's eligible colleges and universities. This project would streamline the application process for applicants and their

counselors by utilizing technology to ensure all necessary application materials are submitted in a timely fashion.

12. Please describe how this project will improve the efficiency of agency operations.

This project would reduce office-supply expenses and allow CCPE staff to work more efficiently by eliminating the manual processing of applications and follow-up on incomplete applications – which is vital because, in addition to the ACE program, the CCPE financial aid coordinator also is responsible for administering the Nebraska Opportunity Grant (NOG) program. The NOG program annually awards more than \$14 million in grants to more than 14,000 Nebraska college students. Both of these programs continue to grow, both in applicants and funds awarded. If the ACE application process remains manual, CCPE eventually would need to hire at least an additional, part-time employee to assist with the processing of these scholarships.

In all, between office supplies, work hours expended, and the eventual hiring of an additional employee, this automated project would create efficiencies of more than \$30,000 a year.

13. Please describe how this project will facilitate collaboration between either local, state, federal and/or other public or private institutions. This project would streamline interactions among the CCPE, a state agency; Nebraska high-school guidance counselors; Nebraska high-school students and their parents; and Nebraska colleges and universities, both state-funded and private. It would do this by ensuring all application materials are submitted in a timely manner, reducing the need for follow-up correspondence and time spent completing additional application materials.

14. Does the project involve the licensing, permitting or regulation of business? No. If yes, explain how the project or service will allow integration with the State of Nebraska's Business Portal, located at: <http://www.nebraska.gov/index.phtml?section=business>, and the One-Stop Online Business registration system located at: <https://www.nebraska.gov/osbr/index.cgi>

15. Community Support. Please include letters of support to document the public expression that has caused you to implement this application. See Attachment 2.

Part III. Technical Information

1. Describe the hardware, software, and communications needed for this project and explain why these choices were made. This proposed online version of the ACE

scholarship application would utilize and integrate a civiCRM customer management system, as well as Drupal, a content management system. Both software systems were chosen because they are open-source programs (no cost) and highly flexible. This project also would utilize fax-to-email software, most likely Hylax. Finally, an additional PC would be necessary, as this automated process would require a computer to handle the fax-to-email and data backup functions.

2. Address any technical issues with the proposed technology including:

- **Conformity with general accepted industry standards. Projects which interface with other state systems (such as distance learning systems) must meet NITC technical standards and guidelines. (The NITC standards and guidelines are located at: <http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/standards/>).** The civiCRM/Drupal development framework is a well-established open-source platform. U.S. government websites that utilize the Drupal platform include the White House, Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Education. The civiCRM is a specified module among the available Drupal add-ons and is utilized by, among others, the New York State Senate.
- **Compatibility with existing institutional and/or statewide infrastructure.** The proposed online application system would work on the PHP platform, which also is used for the State of Nebraska's official website, as well as the Nebraska Legislature's. Internally, CCPE already utilizes the PHP open-source program and this project will expand that use to serve the general public.
- **Reliability, security and scalability (future needs for growth or adaptation).** The Drupal platform is designed to be expanded, if need be, as well as extended over multiple sites/servers. With numerous government sites built on this platform, as documented above, Drupal's track record for reliability and security is excellent. Also, we anticipate someday utilizing the platform for an additional financial-aid program that will benefit former ACE recipients now attending college.

3. Describe how the project will comply with the State's Technology Access Clause: meet all applicable Nebraska Information Technology Commission Standards and Guidelines. A copy of the Standards are available at:

<http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/standards/index.html>. **under 2. Accessibility**

Architecture. This project would be web-based, therefore application text could be enlarged for greater readability. For those applicants who are completely blind, they could receive the necessary assistance from their guidance counselor, as they already would be working closely with them to complete the application.

Part IV. STATE LAW COMPLIANCE

Nebraska law, sections 4-108 through 4-114 state that no political subdivision of the State shall provide public benefits, to include grants or contracts, to a person not lawfully present in the United States. If this application is awarded in whole or in part, and during the time the grant is in effect, the undersigned, on behalf of the political subdivision grant applicant, by signing this grant application, affirmatively states and acknowledges that the political subdivision will comply with this law.

Part V. CONTACT INFORMATION & SIGNATURE

Contact person, and title, for any questions regarding this application:

JASON KEESE PUBLIC INFORMATION AND SPECIAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR
Printed Name Title
Phone # 471-0023 E-mail jason.keese@nebraska.gov
Physical Address: 140 N. 8th ST., SUITE 300, LINCOLN, NE 68508

I, the Authorized Representative of CCPE, certify to the Nebraska State Records Board that the applicant/agency has the necessary authority to undertake the proposed project, will comply with Affirmative Action requirements and provide a drug free workplace environment.

Signed this 13 day of APRIL, 20 11

Marshall G. Hill
Agency Director

Please return completed application to:

Executive Director
Nebraska State Records Board
440 South 8th Street, Suite 210
Lincoln, NE 68508-2294
(402) 471-2745
(402) 471-2406 (fax)

Board Staff use only, do not fill in below this line

Grant Request Number: _____	Date Request Received: _____
Grant Amt Requested: _____	Grant Request Score: _____
Technical Comm. Recommendation: _____	
Grant Disposition: _____	Date of Mtg Minutes: _____

(Last updated 02/07/2011)

Attachment 1 – Part II, Grant detail

Part II – Grant Detail

1. Please describe the project in detail, to include your vision for the project. The Access College Early (ACE) Scholarship Program pays tuition and mandatory fees for qualified, low-income Nebraska high school students to enroll in college courses offered by the state's eligible colleges or universities. High school students may apply for funding under this program by completing the ACE Student Application, which is reviewed by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE) for award consideration. Currently, one person – CCPE's financial aid coordinator – conducts this review. This position manually processes these applications, which number currently roughly 3,000 a year. The current application process is cumbersome for all parties involved. First, students, working with their guidance counselor, go online to the CCPE website and complete the scholarship application, in either Word format or as a fillable PDF. The application requires additional documentation, as well, such as proof of financial hardship and proof of citizenship. In all, there can be as many as five additional documents required for an application. Aside from the student and counselor, the application also requires signatures and/or verification from the student's parent or guardian, as well as the appropriate representative of the college or university at which the student is enrolled in the dual-enrollment course. Once the application is complete, the student has three options for submitting the application and supporting documents: U.S. mail, e-mail, or fax. Currently, the majority of guidance counselors submit their students' applications via fax, which the CCPE financial aid coordinator must manually process and file. Because most applications are submitted by fax, the financial aid coordinator receives well over 9,000 print documents every year for this program. Additionally, students often do not properly complete the application or do not submit all required supporting documents. In those cases, the financial aid coordinator must follow-up with the student and guidance counselor via email. This back-and-forth correspondence can dramatically prolong the application and approval process, and potentially jeopardize the students' scholarship award.

Our proposed project would automate this application process. It would render printed application materials nearly obsolete and streamline the financial-aid process for these low-income high-school students, their counselors, and the colleges and universities at which they're enrolled. First, guidance counselors and their students could access an online, password-secured website to apply for the scholarship. This online system would require the application be completed in its entirety, with all necessary supporting documents, before it's allowed to be submitted for review. The CCPE financial aid coordinator could access these applications online, review them and determine if they're complete. If an application is not complete, this online application system would automatically send an email to the guidance counselor and request the missing information. Once an application is complete, the financial aid coordinator would mark it as such in the system. Participating colleges and universities also would have access to the applications of high-school applicants taking courses for credit at their institutions. These colleges and universities could access the completed applications and verify the students' enrollment. (A student must already be enrolled in a course to receive ACE scholarship funds) Finally, once this is done, the CCPE financial aid coordinator would approve the application and determine the amount of aid to award, therefore closing the case,

automatically generating an award letter that would be emailed to the applicant, and automatically emailing a confirmation to the college or university representative.

This online application system would dramatically reduce paper and office-supply expenses. Furthermore, it would greatly reduce time and effort expended as a result of human error in the application process by automatically requiring completed applications and generating email reminders when necessary. Also, this new system would require that all applications and supporting materials be submitted in PDF form. We recognize that many school districts do not possess the necessary technology to convert printed documents into PDFs, so this proposed online application system would incorporate a fax-to-email-attachment program. Through this program, applications and supporting documents faxed to CCPE would automatically be routed to a computer (not a fax machine), be converted into PDFs and returned via email to the guidance counselors. The counselors, on behalf of the applying student, could then save those PDF documents on their computer and submit them to CCPE through the proposed online application system.

Attachment 2 – Letters of support

Central City Public Schools

BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Dr. Candace Conradt

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Vice-President
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1711 15th Avenue
P.O. Box 57
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Richard Moore
Principal

ELEMENTARY
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Principal

An Equal Opportunity Employer

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APR 12 2011

Coordinating Commission
for Postsecondary Education

April 11, 2011

J. Ritchie Morrow
Financial Aid Coordinator
Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education
140 N 8th St, Suite #300
PO Box 95005
Lincoln NE 68509-5005

Dear Mr. Morrow:

I am most delighted to write a letter of support for your grant proposal which would help to streamline the application process for future ACE Scholarships.

I have been involved in education as a school counselor for twenty-seven years, most recently the high school level. During this time I have seen a greater need to serve those of low income and diverse backgrounds. I have been involved with the educational planning for numerous students with issues that impede their education.

Approval of your proposal could greatly improve the services for adolescents who wish to take college credit classes while still in high school.

Thank you for allowing me to write this letter of support for your project.

Sincerely,

Debra J. Anderson

Debra J. Anderson, School Counselor

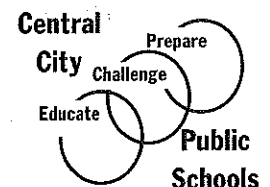


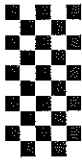
SUPERINTENDENT OFFICE
HIGH SCHOOL OFFICE
MIDDLE SCHOOL OFFICE
ELEMENTARY OFFICE

(308) 946-3055
(308) 946-3086
(308) 946-3056
(308) 946-3057

SUPERINTENDENT FAX
HIGH SCHOOL FAX
MIDDLE SCHOOL FAX
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FAX

(308) 946-3149
(308) 946-2954
(308) 946-2124
(308) 946-3149





CREIGHTON COMMUNITY PUBLIC SCHOOL



Creighton Elementary School
Fred Boelter, Superintendent
Phone: 402-358-3663



PO BOX 10
Creighton, Ne 68729



Creighton High School
Jeff Jensen, Principal
Fax: 402-358-3804

April 11, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been a guidance counselor for many years and have encouraged and assisted students who are eligible for the ACE scholarship since it started. Before the ACE scholarship was available, many students that could be taking college credit courses didn't because it wasn't financially feasible for them. ACE has been a wonderful assistance for many students who normally would not be financially able to take college classes while still in high school. Not only do the students get a head start on their college classes, but it also gives the students the knowledge and confidence to continue their college education after graduating from high school.

I fully support this grant to help streamline the application process. It is truly a good thing for our students.

Sincerely,

Christine Baldwin
Guidance Counselor

Ponca Public School

Ponca Public School / 3rd Grade – 12th Grade
505 3rd Street, Box 568
Ponca, NE 68770
(402)755-5700 (402)755-5773 (Fax)
Michelle Rinas, High School Principal (402)755-5701

www.poncaschool.org
William F. Thompson, Superintendent

Jackson Elementary / Preschool – 2nd Grade
223 North John Street, Box 67
Jackson, NE 68743
(402)632-4276 (402)632-5014 (Fax)
Robert Hayes, Principal

TO: To Whom It May Concern
FROM: Kristie Hayes, Technology Coordinator
Francine Hassler, Secondary Guidance Counselor
DATE: April 14, 2011

Subject: Grant Application for ACE Scholarship
(Funding to streamline the application process used by the State of Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education)

On behalf of the students of the Ponca Public School District, Ponca, Nebraska we are writing to support the state of Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Post-Secondary Education Committee's efforts to obtain grant funding designed to streamline the process by which young people access ACE Scholarships.

The ACE scholarship program is an excellent financial opportunity to assist college bound high school students at our school with extra support and incentive to obtain post-secondary education.

Since Ponca School began accessing ACE scholarship opportunities for our student body, \$487.50 has been awarded to our students through this program. It is hard to measure the impact this scholarship program has had on our students. We do know that this program provides financial support for students to access higher education opportunities. We believe it, too, serves as a catalyst to plant the seed of "I can attend college"; that may be one of the strongest features of the ACE scholarship program.

The ACE scholarship program's benefits to students are maximized only if the program is administered effectively. Our experiences with the ACE Scholarship program involve Mr. J. Ritchie Morrow, Ponca School's contact person for the application portion of obtaining ACE scholarship funding for students. During our association with him, Mr. Morrow has demonstrated (and continues to demonstrate) professional efficiency and courtesy as he communicates with us throughout the academic calendar year. He is consistently prompt, thorough, and concise in his responses to us. He makes our job as easy as possible to get financial help to our students. Based on our working history with Mr. Morrow, we believe that he will continue to provide this type of excellent support to our school district which inevitably helps students.

It is our hope that the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education for the State of Nebraska will receive grant funding to make the ACE Scholarship application process even more efficient. The ACE Scholarship program and Mr. J. Ritchie Morrow have our full support and best wishes in this process.

Thank you for giving this grant application your full consideration and support.

cc: file copy
Mr. William Thompson, Superintendent Ponca Public School District
Ms. Michelle Rinas, Secondary Principal Ponca Public School District
J. Ritchie Morrow, Financial Aid Coordinator, Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education

Grand Island Senior High

Counseling Department



To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Dr. Jenna Christensen and I am a guidance counselor at Grand Island Senior High School. During my four years here at Senior High, I have had the privilege of working with many students. For the most part, all of these students have high aspirations to go to college; however many of them do not have the resources to even begin paying for college courses. Because of the Access College Early (ACE) funds, I have had over 300 students be able to take college coursework in their high school career and get a start on what they only believed to be a far off dream.

For whatever reason, these students do not believe they are "college material" and so we, as counselors, try to encourage them to try a course for dual credit. When they are successful (over 99% of our students are), they begin to change their thought process and they start to see college as a possibility instead of just a pipe dream. Our students are very successful in their college coursework. Overall, in a four-year period, we have had less than ten students who did not earn college credit for their coursework—that includes all students and not just those who have an ACE scholarship.

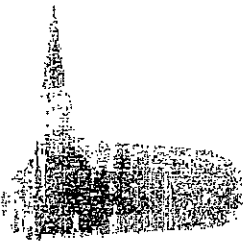
The ACE scholarship has provided countless opportunities for our students that would have been impossible otherwise. Because of ACE, we now have more students attending college and pursuing degrees than ever before. Because they get an early start on college, they see that they truly are "college material" and are realizing they can go and further their education. It is also opening doors for students to lighten their loads during their first year of college so that they are able to transition into college more effectively. This program has truly been a godsend for our students and school. Without it, our students' dreams would be just that—a dream. With the program, those dreams are now realities.

Sincerely yours,

Jenna S. Christensen, Ph.D.

Jenna S. Christensen, Ph.D.
Guidance Counselor

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School



April 11, 2011

To Whom It May Concern,

It is my honor to write in support of the Access College Early (ACE) Scholarship.

Humphrey St. Francis has had several student take advantage of the opportunities the ACE Scholarship provides for students to earn college credit. The students who have received the ACE Scholarship were able to get a successful head start on their college career for free, an opportunity they otherwise could not afford to do. Many of the candidates that apply for the scholarship are either on free and reduced lunch or have had a serious financial hardship to their family.

One ambitious young lady applied for, and was awarded, the ACE Scholarship her junior year and all of her senior year. As a result she has completed one semester of college classes at Northeast Community College and will only have one semester left to complete her culinary degree. Consequently, she has been awarded a half tuition scholarship from Northeast for the 2011-2012 school years and has decided to add a business, entrepreneur degree because she can now afford to and hopes to one day open her own restaurant.

Another student, whose family does not value education very much, decided to try an online college class as a result of being awarded the ACE Scholarship. After successfully completing the class, the student is eager to continue his agriculture degree at Northeast and use his knowledge back on the family farm.

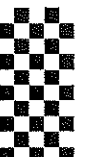
Without the ACE Scholarship many of our students would not be able to afford to start their pursuit of a college education. The ACE Scholarship provides our students an opportunity to get a taste of the rigors of college classes in the safe setting of the high school environment through on-line classes and a chance to also travel to campus for the full college experience.

The students at Humphrey St. Francis have been truly blessed through the opportunities the ACE Scholarship has provided and fully support the notion to continue its opportunities for high school students.

Sincerely,

Julie D. Tetschner
Guidance Counselor

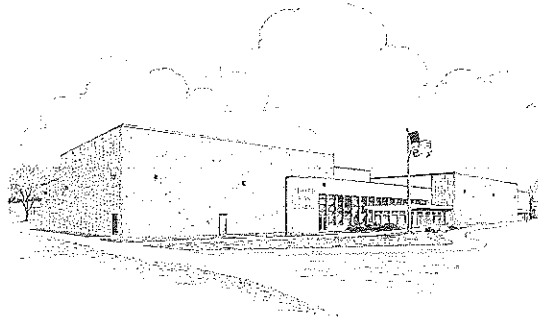
Box 277
300 S. 7th St.
Humphrey, NE 68642
402-923-0818
Fax-402-923-1590



Seward High School

Chad Denker
Principal

Steve Borer
Assistant Principal
Activities Director



David Greathouse
Counselor

Carla Schwahn
Counselor

532 Northern Heights • Seward, Nebraska 68434
Phone 402-643-2988 • Fax 402-643-2599

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APR 12 2011

J. Ritchie Morrow
Financial Aid Coordinator
140 N 8th St. Suite #300
PO Box 95005
Lincoln, NE 68509-5005

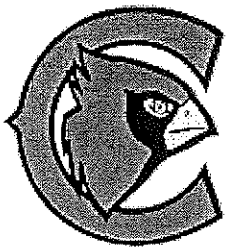
Coordinating Commission
for Postsecondary Education

RE: Ace Scholarship

We have been able to use the Ace Scholarship for students of need since it was made available. It has been a very valuable tool when encouraging these students to look at college level work. Many times these students don't see the opportunity to take these classes for college credit because of the families personal financial situation. Each student that has received the Ace has not only been successful but was very excited about the opportunity. One of these students is currently completing the second year of nursing school and doing well. At Seward we believe in the Ace Scholarship.

Sincerely

David Greathouse, Counselor



South Sioux City Community Schools

3301 G Street, PO Box 158, South Sioux City, NE 68776
Phone (402) 494-2433 Fax (402) 494-2464
Website: www.ssccardinals.org

Ed Akins, Principal
Tom Luxford, Associate Principal
Scott Cole, Associate Principal
Kelly R. Flynn, Associate Principal/
Activities Director

April 11, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter of support for a wonderful program; the ACE Scholarship Program. At South Sioux City High School many of our students have the opportunity to take dual credit classes but many cannot afford to take them for college credit. Because of the ACE scholarship, this has changed what our students are able to do. Not only do they get the challenge of a college class, they now can earn the college credit because they are awarded this scholarship. Many who had never thought of college are now considering it because they are beginning to realize there are funds for them if they just look.

This program has been very beneficial to our students. It has given many of them a new direction in life. It also encourages many of the underclassmen to take the dual credit classes because they have heard they can possibly get the tuition paid. It has even helped some of our students enter the work force because with the help of this scholarship they were able to take CNA classes and begin a career in that field. Once this happens they also begin to realize they can pass a college class and many move on to the nursing field.

We hope the ACE Scholarship Program can continue. It definitely has made an impact not only on students at South Sioux City High School but the lives of our students. It is a very beneficial program.

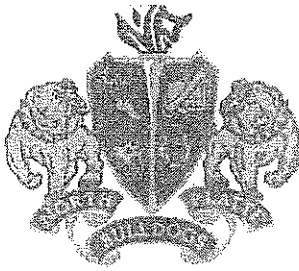
Sincerely,

Stephanie Hames
Counselor

Alan Carothers
Counselor

Linda Swanson
Counselor

Jason Craig
Counselor



North Platte High School

123 WEST SECOND STREET
NORTH PLATTE, NEBRASKA 69101-1899
PHONE: 308.335-7111
FAX: 308.335-7111

"Our job is their learning. We're good at our job because futures depend on it."

Principal
TODD L. RHODES

Associate Principal
JAMES AYRES

Dean of Students
VIKKI CARLSON

Activities Director
RICH REINERT

12 April, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

As a guidance counselor at North Platte High School we are always looking for educational opportunities for our 1200 students. With the staffing we have and the requirements our students must meet we have been restricted by what we can offer our students.

The dual credit classes we offer persist to give our students an edge. By students meeting high school requirements and work toward college credit student can better utilize their future educational opportunities and be better prepared when they begin their full time post-secondary experience. The unfortunate aspect of this opportunity is the cost. Students perfectly capable of taking the challenging dual credit classes often think twice because they are not eligible to receive federal assistance for education until they graduate high school.

The Access College Early program has removed this barrier for many of our students wishing to step into the rigors of a dual credit class. With the ACE scholarship available students are more likely to enroll in the dual credit classes. My experience has been that students that build up some college credit are much more confident and personally invested when they move on.

I fully appreciate and endorse what the ACE scholarship program has done for the students at North Platte High School.

Sincerely,

Wesley Caruso
Guidance Counselor, North Platte High School

Franklin Public Schools

Dr. Kenneth Schroeder,
Superintendent of Schools
Franklin High School Principal
kschroed@esu11.org

Shelley Kahrs
Elementary & Middle School Principal
skahrs@esu11.org

1001 M Street, Franklin, Nebraska 68939-1199
Phone: (308) 425-6283
Fax: (308) 425-6553

Alan Gottula
Guidance & Counseling
agottula@esu11.org

April 11, 2011

J. Ritchie Morrow, Financial Aid Coordinator
Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education
140 North 8th Street, Suite #300
P.O. Box 95005
Lincoln, NE 68509-5005

RECEIVED

APR 12 2011

Coordinating Commission
for Postsecondary Ed.

Regarding the Access College Early Scholarship Program.

Please consider the following as a letter of support of the Access College Early Scholarship program. In the years that I have been involved with the program numerous students have had the opportunity to take courses for college credit at Franklin High School through the Nebraska Wesleyan University Honors Academy that without an ACE Scholarship would not have had sufficient financial resources to do so. ACE truly allowed them to "access college early" and begin laying the foundation for future academic success and begin in earnest the pursuit of their educational and career goals.

I will enthusiastically support the continuation of the Access College Early Scholarship program and encourage the continued investment in the future through the support of education. Thank you and please feel free to contact me should you have any additional questions or concerns.

Respectfully,



Alan Gottula

[Faint, illegible text, likely a carbon copy or bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]

**OSCEOLA PUBLIC SCHOOLS***P.O. Box 198**565 S. Kimmel Street**Osceola, NE 68651-0198**Phone (402) 747-3121**Fax (402) 747-3041**http://www.edline.net/pages/Osceola_Public_School***Steve Rinehart**
*Superintendent***Darren Schmidt**
*MS/HS Principal***Sarah Johnson**
*Elementary Principal***Marla Teegerstrom**
MS/HS Counselor

April 11, 2011

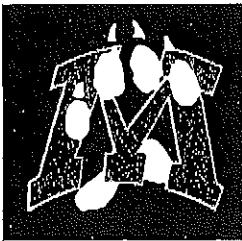
Dear Ritchie:

This letter is being written to verify that Osceola Public Schools supports the ACE (Access College Early) Scholarship Program Act (LB 192), which pays tuition and mandatory fees for qualified, low-income high school students to enroll in college courses from Nebraska's colleges or universities, either through dual-enrollment or early enrollment agreements with these institutions.

Authorized by the Nebraska Legislature in 2007, qualifying Osceola Public Schools students may apply for funding under this program by completing the ACE Student Application, which is reviewed by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE) for award consideration.

Signed,

Marla Teegerstrom,
School Counselor
Osceola Public Schools



Maywood Public School

#1 Tiger Drive
P O Box 46
Maywood, NE 69038

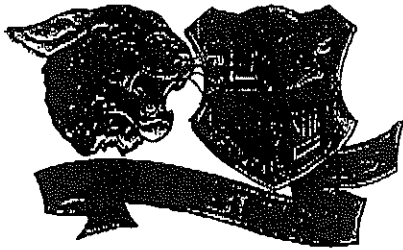
Phone: 308-362-4223 ~ Fax: 308-362-4454 ~ Website: www.maywoodtigers.org

April 11, 2011

I am writing this letter in support of the Access College Early Scholarship Program. I am currently the school counselor at Maywood Public Schools in Maywood, NE. I have been the counselor here for two years and previously taught third grade for eight years. My experience, along with the knowledge passed to me by the previous counselor, proves that the Access College Early Scholarship Program has assisted many students in education. The opportunities that this program offers can help students begin their college journey and present them the reality that college is a possibility for their future.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Stengel
Maywood Public School
School Counselor



Scottsbluff Senior High School

313 East 27th Street • Scottsbluff, Nebraska 69361

Phone (308) 635-6230 • Fax. No. 635-6240

April 11, 2011

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is written in support of the Access College Early (ACE) program set up in the state of Nebraska. I cannot say enough good things about this program. For starters, it has helped to "level the playing field" in the realm of higher education. Students whose families can afford it have always been able to access college classes while in high school. That has left many students wanting but unable to take those courses for college credit.

Research shows that if high school students take some college classes in high school and are successful that they are much more likely to go on to college. Since the inception of this program I believe that our college going rates among low income students has increased. Many of our students believe that they are quite capable of being successful in college classes, having already proven that fact.

I would hope that there will be continued support for this program on the state level. The results have been most positive at Scottsbluff High School. If I can be of further assistance please feel free to call me at (308) 635-6242.

Sincerely,

Julia Newman

Senior Counselor

Niobrara Public School
247 N. Hwy. 12
PO Box 310
Niobrara, NE 68760
402 857 3322

April 11, 2011

J. Ritchie Morrow
Financial Aid Coordinator
Coordinating Commission for
Postsecondary Education
140 N 8th St, Suite #300
PO Box 95005
Lincoln NE 68509-5005

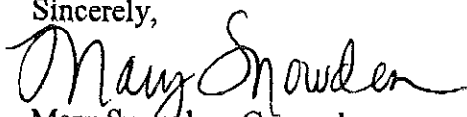
Dear Ritchie,

I am writing this letter in reference to the ACE scholarship program for high school students that are interested in getting a head start on their college education. At Niobrara, we have had many students take advantage of this opportunity and receive the needed financial assistance to register for general education classes offered at Northeast Community College or another institution of choice.

Many of our students are on a free or reduced lunch program but still want to graduate from high school and pursue a college education. This money is an incentive to start this process. Many of their families do not have the finances to pay for the college tuition as a junior or senior in high school but instead are planning for the future when their child has enrolled as a freshman in college. This is also giving them the opportunity to take a college course and understand what is required at the college level and the expectations of a college.

Please continue to offer this assistance to our students in public high schools. It is greatly appreciated by the students and also by our high schools in Nebraska.

Sincerely,


Mary Snowden, Counselor
Niobrara Public School

Wayne High School

611 West 7th • Wayne, Nebraska 68787

Phone: (402) 375-3150 • Fax: (402) 375-5251 • <http://www.wayneschools.org>

April 12, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

The Access College Early (ACE) scholarship has been a valuable tool for Wayne High School students. Many of our students pursue dual college credit courses, and it is a wonderful thing to be able to offer that opportunity to students whose families do not have the resources to pay for it.

The P-16 initiative is also greatly aided by this scholarship. The students who qualify for the scholarship are often the same students who need the encouragement to pursue college. By being able to afford a course or two in high school, they have more confidence in their ability to pursue college and are more likely to do so after they graduate from high school. We all know the importance of increasing the college-going rate of Nebraska students, and this is a very important way to increase those numbers.

I have high hopes that my students who qualify will continue to be able to take dual college credit courses, just as my students from higher socioeconomic stations are able to do.

Thank you for your support of Nebraska students.



Melody Hill
Wayne High School guidance counselor

Learning for life.

DPS Guidance Counseling Department

P.O. Box 547, Deshler, NE 68340

Joan Unruh, Counselor

402-365-7272, ext. 121 junruh@esu6.org

Marla Finke, Guidance Assistant

402-365-7272, ext. 163 mfinke@esu6.org

April 11, 2011

Ritchie Morrow

Financial Aid Coordinator

P.O. Box 95005

Lincoln, NE 68509-5005

Dear Mr. Morrow,

It is my intent in this letter to offer support and encouragement for continuation of the Access College Early (ACE) Scholarships offered to high school students.

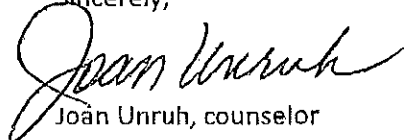
Since high school students cannot receive federal financial aid in any other form, it is imperative that students have the option to apply for an ACE Scholarship. Students that receive the scholarships are on the free or reduced lunch program. These students have shown obvious financial need through their eligibility for the lunch program. It would be a burden on a family to pay outright for college classes when they are on a restricted budget as indicated by the lunch program eligibility.

It is such a boost to the students to be able to accomplish some college credits while still in high school. Often, it is the low income student that needs the confidence builder of completing the college course while still a high school student; this accomplishment gives them the courage to face an uncertain future. To complete the college course shows them that they can achieve. Of course, once they attend college full-time, they can then qualify for other federal aid.

We need our entire workforce to be competent and fulfilling their potential. The ACE program proves to students that they could be part of that competent workforce. The college credits are valuable; but the confidence builder and pride that is instilled in the student is really invaluable! Worth every penny!

Please call me if I could lend further support to the ACE program goals. I can be reached at the numbers listed above.

Sincerely,



Joan Unruh, counselor

LITCHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOL

BOARD OF EDUCATION:
Cari L. Kucera, President
Britt Howard, Secretary
Blava Hupp, Treasurer

PO Box 167- 500 N Main
PHONE/FAX 308-446-2244
Litchfield, NE 68852

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Bradley Stithem, Principal

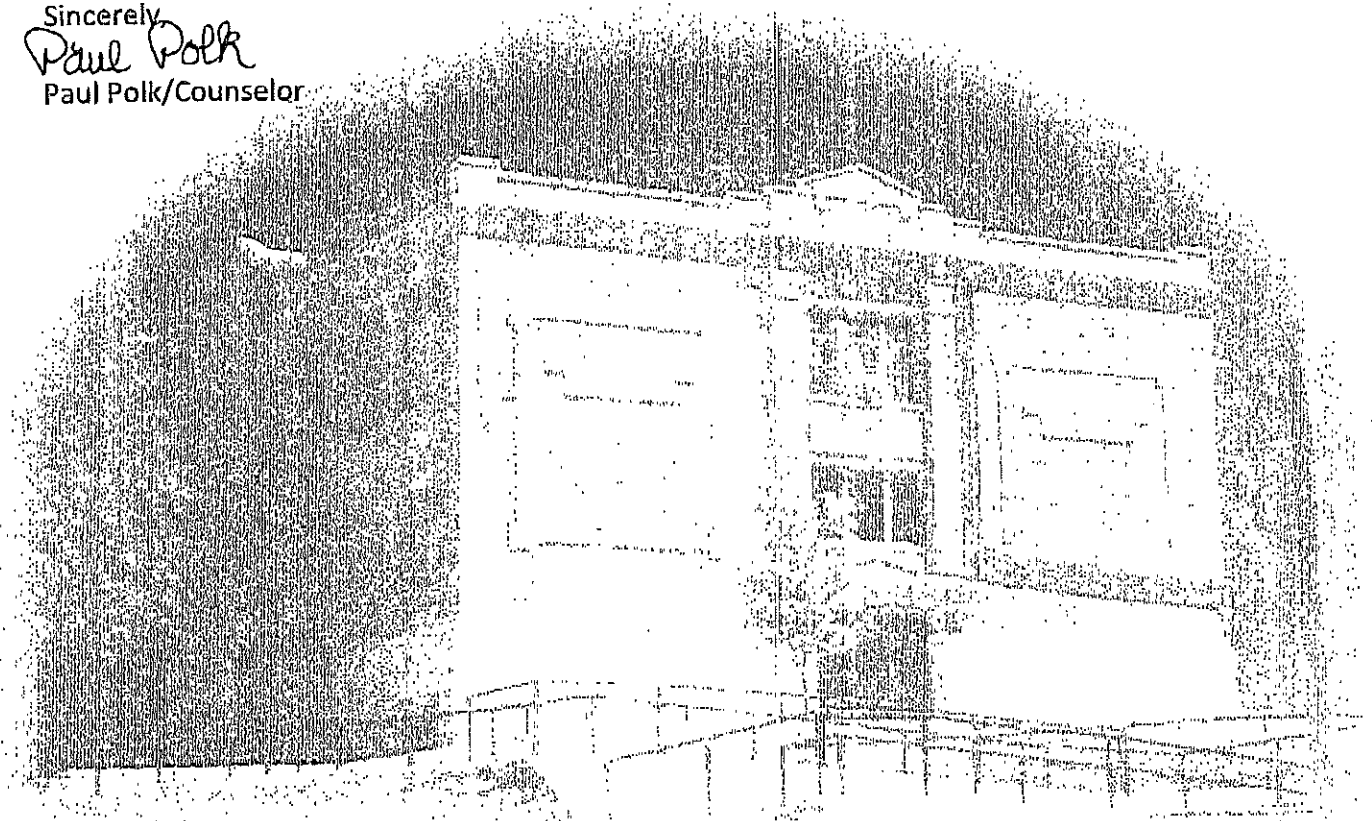
Paul Polk/Counselor
Litchfield Public Schools
500 North Main
Litchfield, NE 68852

To Whom It May Concern:

This is a letter written concerning the ACE Scholarship Program and what kind of an impact it has on our community and school. We have been fortunate enough to have students who qualify for the ACE Scholarships take advantage of this opportunity. It allows these students to get a head start on their college career. Not only that, but these same students are now more likely to go to college just based on the fact that they have been able to take college classes and realize that they have the same opportunity as everyone else. It is a positive tool for students who otherwise might not look towards college as a viable option. It has been a very worthwhile program in our schools and I hope to be able to use it in the future.

Sincerely,

Paul Polk
Paul Polk/Counselor



AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

SOUTHERN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
115 South 11th Street - P.O. Box 237
Wymore, Nebraska 68466
Phone: (402) 645-3326 Fax (402) 645-8049
<http://www.southernschools.org>

April 11, 2011

To Whom This May Concern:

I am writing a letter of support for the Nebraska ACE program to continue. I understand that Mr. Morrow and his staff are trying to streamline the application process for this most important program. The ACE program has helped my students by allowing them to experience college on line classes without the financial stress of paying for tuition. I have had an increase of 5 new students in a class of 33 that took advantage of this program. There were a total of 14 students taking college classes. In a small rural school, this is a huge increase for students taking college classes. Please allow Mr. Morrow to continue this most effective program, the Nebraska ACE program. If you need further information, please contact me.

Sincerely,



Mrs. Patty Goes
School Counselor



GORDON-RUSHVILLE



Public Schools

810 North Oak

PO Box 530

Gordon, Nebraska 69343

Phone: (308) 282-1322

Fax: (308) 282 2207

April 11, 2011

Dear Grant Committee:

This letter is in support of the Access College Early Scholarship Program. This program has been a great benefit to our students through the years. It has provided tuition support for our low income students so that they could participate in dual enrollment opportunities while they are in high school. Without this scholarship assistance, these students would not have been able to afford the tuition, and therefore would not have been able to take advantage of these classes.

It is a very worthwhile program and its benefits will be seen in these students for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Jana Goranson
Guidance Counselor
Gordon-Rushville High School

SUPERINTENDENT
Merrell Nelson
810 North Oak St.
Gordon, NE 69343
(308) 282-1322

GRHS PRINCIPAL
Lori Liggett
810 North Oak St.
Gordon, NE 69343
(308) 282-0894

GRMS PRINCIPAL
Casey Slama
310 Sprague St.
Rushville, NE 69360
(308) 327-2491

GORDON ELEMENTARY PRIN.
Jean Hensley
500 West Second St.
Gordon, NE 69343
(308) 282-0216

RUSHVILLE ELEM
Casey Slama
410 Sprague St.
Rushville, NE 69360
(308) 327-2448



Palmer Public School



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John Valasek

Gary Monter, Administrator
Phone 308-894-3065
Fax 308-894-8245
PO Box 248, Palmer, Nebraska 68864

Board of Education
Todd Weller, Treasurer
Barb Larson, Secretary
Jennifer Kunze

April 11, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

I am the Guidance Counselor at Palmer Public School in Palmer, Nebraska. I am writing in support of the ACE Scholarship program. I have had many students benefit from this scholarship. Many of the students who have received the scholarship would not have taken college level courses if the scholarship was not available to them. It has enabled students who are at an advanced level to experience college coursework without the expense. Most of the students who have received the scholarship from Palmer are those who were not looking at attending college after high school because of their socioeconomic level. Many see their poverty level as a barrier to succeeding at a post-secondary level. The ACE scholarship has given them the opportunity to see that they can succeed at this level and many have gone on to 4 year institutions.

As a Guidance Counselor, I am grateful for what this scholarship opportunity has done to help the kids in my school district. I hope that the opportunity is there for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Denise Bruland
Counselor
Palmer Public School